



Clifford Beers Clinic

Building Strength in Children and Families

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TO: MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

FROM: DR. ALICE FORRESTER
CLIFFORD W. BEERS CHILD GUIDANCE CLINIC, NEW HAVEN, CT

DATE: MARCH 13, 2012

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PLEASE SUPPORT HOUSE BILL 5453-

AAC DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

The Clifford Beers Clinic is now celebrating 100 years of providing professional and caring services to traumatized children and families in the Greater New Haven Area.

Our Clinic employs 85 full-time professionals, 41 of whom are members of the AFSCME Union. Our employees receive good health and retirement benefits. Most of our employees stay with us for their entire careers. We provide outpatient mental health care and counseling from: two offices located in New Haven; one office in Guilford and one office in West Haven. We also provide care and counseling at two school-based clinics and our professionals frequently visit families at home to provide in-home care and counseling.

We are currently providing care to 1,900 children and family members to equal about 3200 community members in the Greater New Haven area. Our total annual budget is about \$7M: 46% comes from state funding; 26% Third Party Payors, 1% from federal funding; and 27% from the generous charitable contributions from members of the community. With a \$7M annual budget and 3,200 family and children as clients, the annual cost of care is about \$3,700 per client.

About 70% of the children who come to the Clifford Beers Clinic are victims of severe trauma and/or abuse. After 6 months of treatment and care with our professional support, we are very happy that about 50% of these children are generally not showing any continuing symptoms related to the trauma and abuse, and these children and their families can begin to live happier and more productive lives. Over time, most of our clients and their families start to feel better and overcome their horrible symptoms. We are very successful in our mission to help children and families!

From a cost-benefit perspective, The Clifford Beers Clinic is really helping families at an extremely low annual cost (about \$3,700 per person). This is compared to the cost of residential placement and care per person, which can be as high as about \$400,000 per child per year. Also, if a traumatized child eventually gets tangled up in our prison system (which is the case more often than not if the child does not receive proper care and counseling), then the annual cost for prison is about \$56,000 per person.

We strongly support **House Bill 5453**. During the 2011 Session, the Connecticut Legislature fully embraced the importance of trauma-informed care services by enacting a law requiring peace officers at the scene of a family violence incident to inform victims of the availability of trauma-informed care services. This year, **House Bill 5453** fully defines and explains the meaning of trauma-informed care as the term is used in General Statutes Sections 46b-38b and 46b-38c(See lines 56-82 and 151-153 of the bill); and we support this definition.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 5453.